

**Council on Postsecondary Education  
Committee on Equal Opportunities  
August 20, 2001**

## **The Kentucky State P-16 Council – Opportunities for Collaboration**

---

The Kentucky State P-16 Council (pre-kindergarten through baccalaureate) is made up of three members of the Kentucky Board of Education, three members of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, and two representatives from the Education Professional Standards Board. Created in spring 1999, it conducted the first of its quarterly meeting in July 1999. Advancing both KERA and House Bill 1, the P-16 Council advises the Board of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education on the preparation and development of teachers, the preparation of students for postsecondary education, and policy measures to increase the number of students successfully participating in postsecondary levels of education.

During its first two years, the P-16 Council has tackled a number of critical issues aimed at increasing the level of achievement and equitable access to educational opportunity on the part of Kentucky's students. Statewide teams of P-12 teachers and postsecondary educators made specific recommendations to reduce the need for postsecondary remediation in English and mathematics. The P-16 Council promoted and endorsed the Kentucky Early Mathematics Testing Program to help high school students identify deficiencies they can correct before entering college. Under the auspices of the P-16 Council, the Council on Postsecondary Education and the Kentucky Department of Education have sponsored statewide conferences on developmental education, on the crucial role of arts and sciences faculty in teacher education, and on transforming the role of guidance counselors to promote postsecondary preparation for all students. The P-16 Council also co-sponsored the Governor's Literacy Summit, which brought together participants from institutions and agencies involved in literacy issues at the preschool, P-12, postsecondary, and adult levels for the first time.

Perhaps the most radical issue that the P-16 Council is examining is the proposal to offer a single, rigorous high school curriculum as the default curriculum for all students, rather than steering only a fraction of high school students into a curriculum designated as "pre-college." The P-16 Council has reviewed policy research findings indicating that the students who benefit most from a rigorous high school core curriculum are students in demographic groups most likely to be dissuaded from enrolling in pre-college programs. It is aware of research documenting the correlation between a rigorous high school curriculum and the likelihood of postsecondary success. P-16 Council members also are considering the economic consequences of systematically preparing only a fraction of students for postsecondary education, both for individuals and for the Commonwealth. The emphasis of the state's GEAR UP programs in algebra, science, and language arts reflects the growing general recognition that access to academic rigor – and, especially, access to high-level high school mathematics – is an equity issue.

The P-16 Council is considering other ways to "lift the ceiling" of academic achievement, including increasing access to dual credit opportunities, the Virtual High School, and adult education providers to create true "seamlessness" within and between the P-12 and postsecondary systems.

Staff Preparation by Dianne M. Bazell